

## **Cruise - Science Advisory Panel - June 10, 2010**

Thank you for your service on this important panel.

RCA supports the cruise industry. But Alaska voters and residents want fair taxation to build infrastructure - and verified proof of no harm to the marine environment.

Cruise ships are ideal replacements for the subsidized logging and pulp industry that was literally killing the wildlife and fisheries habitat in SE – bay by bay, since 1955.

Once logging ended and the pulp mills closed – Sitka & Ketch – both quality of life & water increased dramatically – that benefits cruise industry in these ports and the region.

The highest Alaska priority is to protect the clean, pristine water that welcomes back millions of migratory salmon, feeding whales, herring, seals and sea lions.

That is the highest and best use of coastal Alaska – as natural, marine-based habitat, unlike any remaining in the entire nation or North America. And it will be protected.

I'm familiar with Maryland and Delaware – Chesapeake Bay country. And I never want to see what happened there occur in Alaska – a slow, 100-year death of marine and waterfowl species, one by one, until all was gone, probably not to recover.

In Alaska, we can prevent the Chesapeake Scenario through the use of available technology and funding, both private and public.

RCA believes that cruise ships should operate as cleanly as possible – and industry should modify their vessels to do so.

Cost is not a factor when the industry nets billions on its Alaska operations and the state has ample monies available for spending, not saving; these funds must be spent.

One partnership model we have is right across the street in Juneau. Local float planes fly thousands of tourists and cruise passengers each year, but the engine noise on take-off drove local residents wild.

Local cruise-tax money was authorized for low-interest loans to replace the radial Otter engines with muffled turbo-engines, at \$1 million each. 5 have now been replaced, and the 1% loans are repaid over 10 years. A wonderful change.

Alaska can do a similar service for cruise ships. If they want to replace, modify or 'polish' their present treatment systems with a Rochem – reverse osmosis adaptation - something that works - the state could make loans or corporate tax credits available. And RCA would actively support those types of appropriation.

RCA also supports using the Juneau treatment plant adjacent to the cruise docks to allow ships that do not have the ability or holding capacity to discharge in federal waters. We far prefer that ships discharge in the Gulf of Alaska, or into the Juneau treatment plant, rather than discharge half-clean in state waters.

About 10 ships in the Alaska cruise fleet now hold and dump 12 miles off-shore, avoiding the Alaska discharge permit system. That is an option now, but in the future this waste needs to be properly treated in all US waters. And that upgrade process starts in Alaska, not in Panama or Liberia.

In conclusion, continue your important work, and please come to solid recommendations on treatment technology based on effectiveness. Funding will be there if the right technology is available.

Thank you

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